

MARYETT VAN BUSKIRK.

[To accompany Bill H. R. No. 245.]

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MARCH 2, 1860.

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Mr. BRIGGS, from the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Revolutionary Claims, to whom were referred the petition and papers of Maryett Van Buskirk, heir of Thomas Van Buskirk, respectfully report:*

That they have examined this case with great care, and they unanimously concur that the facts set forth by the petitioner are fully sustained by the evidence.

It appears that the petitioner, Maryett Van Buskirk, is the lineal descendant of Thomas Van Buskirk, who was in his lifetime a citizen of Bergen county, New Jersey. That during the period of our revolutionary struggle he was a wealthy farmer and grazier, and a man of great influence. The evidence before your committee shows that he was one of the most ardent whigs of the revolution, and in a community where a large part of the population was hostile to the American cause. It further appears from the evidence, and certificates on file, that the American troops at different times, under the command of Generals Wayne, Greene, and other officers, during the period ranging between the years 1777 and 1780, encamped at Harrington, (or Peramus, as sometimes called,) in said county and State. In the latter years, the winter of 1779-'80, General Washington with the main army were encamped at Morristown, near by. When your committee state that as early as the year 1777 dates the poverty and extreme wants of the army, and the prostration of the credit of the government, they state facts known to all men. It abundantly appears by the evidence that from this time, while our army was in winter quarters at Valley Forge, until the year 1780, the said Thomas Van Buskirk was frequently applied to by the several officers commanding the American troops for supplies of cattle, horses, forage, grain, and other necessary articles, all of which he furnished; and he frequently purchased articles from others with his own money to enable him to supply the army. The difficult task of obtaining supplies at this time, and in a part of the State notoriously disaffected; the resort to force

by our officers to obtain them under the command of a resolution of Congress, are facts known in history. The evidence establishes the fact that it was during this time that the ancestor of the petitioner, Thomas Van Buskirk, furnished these supplies, as the evidence shows, with cheerfulness and alacrity. It is also proven that when the British had possession of Philadelphia in 1778, and Colonel Lee had been sent into New Jersey to carry off and destroy all that otherwise might fall into the hands of the enemy, in order to cut off their supplies, among those that suffered in this expedition was the said Thomas Van Buskirk, who cheerfully gave up what he had.

It appears that he seldom was paid in money for his property, but instead received certificates, executed by the several officers in command, as proven by the depositions of parties who saw the officers sign many of the same. One of the witnesses examined on the first day of December, 1854, says that he was then ninety-six years of age, and that he saw Colonel Lee, subscribe two of the certificates, and that he saw the property described in three of the others delivered to Major Tilgham.

It is satisfactorily proven that the amount of supplies of every kind thus furnished by Thomas Van Buskirk to the American army, with those destroyed by Colonel Lee, amounted to the sum of twenty thousand three hundred and sixty-seven dollars, which is covered by the said certificates of the American officers, and still remain unpaid.

The said Thomas Van Buskirk died in March, 1811, while the country was yet poor, without having presented his claim for payment. On several occasions, when requested to do so by his friends, he declined, assigning as his reason that his country had not recovered from the embarrassments occasioned by the struggle for independence, and that it required the money more than he did, at the same time he expressed his conviction that the debt would at a future day be paid to his heirs.

Your committee have no doubt of the facts set forth in the petition, and which are fully established by the said certificates, and the depositions on file. They state the amounts due, and promise payment with interest, and it is abundantly proven that up to the death of the said Thomas Van Buskirk he retained these memorials with a fondness and tenacity known only to the patriots who lived in the day that tried men's souls. It is proven by several witnesses who were around his death-bed, that the last evidence of his consciousness was his request to see these proofs of his services to his country.

The petitioner, the lineal descendant of said Thomas Van Buskirk, and his heir-at-law, now presents this demand for payment; and your committee, fully recognizing the obligation of the government to pay claims so just in their character, and so satisfactorily established, have unanimously come to the conclusion that the gross amount of said certificates, above specified, ought to be paid, and your committee therefore report the accompanying bill.